

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Merry Ghebretatios

Director of Global Health

2024 Canadian Medical Students Conference

April 11-14, 2024, Vancouver, BC



I. INTRODUCTION

The

Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) is the representative voice of Canadian medical students to the national medical organizations, to the federal government, to the public, and to other external bodies. The CFMS represents over 9,000 medical students at 15 Canadian medical schools from coast to coast.

The CFMS Director of Global Health (Dir. GH) is responsible for advancing the global health interests of the CFMS primarily through:

1. representing CFMS medical students at International Federation of Medical Students' Association (IFMSA) meetings as NMO President and Head of Delegation, as well as to external persons and organizations, and
2. overseeing global health and international development projects that develop at a national and local level through the vast network of over 200 National Officers, Global Health Liaisons (GHLs), Local Officers, and committee members.

The Dir. GH oversees a leadership team consisting of the following members, each led by one or two National Officers or Coordinators. The first six (6) National Officers lead committees that parallel the Standing Committee structure within the IFMSA.

1. National Officer of Human Rights and Peace (NORP)
2. National Officer of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights including HIV/AIDS (NORSH)
3. National Officer of Public Health (NOPH)
4. National Exchanges Officer (NEO)
5. National Officer of Research Exchange (NORE)
6. National Officer of Global Health Education (NOGHE)
7. National Officer of Partnerships (NOP)
8. Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task Force (HEART) Co-Chairs
9. IFMSA Coordinator

The Dir. GH shall, in addition to other duties within the Board, encourage and facilitate local global health activities at member schools. Occasionally, the Dir. GH will also represent the CFMS to various external committees and organizations as deemed necessary by the CFMS President.

I am pleased to discuss here the activities conducted within the Director of Global Health Portfolio for the term of 2023-2024 as of CMSC 2024.

II. ACTIVITIES AND PROJECT AREAS

Specific events and activities:

1. IFMSA August Meeting 2023 (IFMSA AM23)
 - a. Attended AM23 in Delhi, India as co-Head of Delegation where a 3-person delegation from the CFMS represented the interests of CFMS medical students. Our activities included electing Chairperson and vice-chairperson, returning officers, supervising councils, various committees, an executive board for the 32/34 term, and other IFMSA officials responsible for running the

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- organization. We attended presentations of candidates for hosting 73rd General Assembly March Meeting 2024 and voted on them. We had advancing conversations about various bylaw and constitution changes that had been proposed. The most notable bylaw change to be adopted was proposed by IFMSA-Quebec, among others, and allowed some associate members of the IFMSA to have voting rights. This led to changes in CFMS Canada's representation of Quebec schools which is detailed in a Memorandum of Agreement that has been signed by IFMSA-QC. There was an international exchange fair where delegates presented CFMS-Canada's exchange program which launched for the first time again since the pandemic. We developed partnerships with medical student associations around the world, and engaged in relationship building with the IFMSA-Quebec delegation. We endorsed statements related to EDI within the IFMSA and human rights issues, specifically some anti-black racism that became evident during and following the presentation of candidates for hosting MM24. The two delegates also signed contracts with international medical student associations to be launched for the first time during this term. The delegation participated in the National Food and Drink gathering where we shared Canadian snacks and got to try international foods ourselves.
2. IFMSA Americas Regional Meeting 2023 (IFMSA AmRM23)
 - a. Attended the AmRM24 Presidents' Sessions virtually with our IFMSA Coordinator where we engaged in conversations on issues important to the Americas Region and voted on resolutions. Most motions were procedural and time was dedicated to determining potential host countries for the upcoming AmRM25 meeting.
 3. IFMSA March Meeting 2024 (IFMSA MM24)
 - a. Represented CFMS medical students as co-Head of Delegation with Kenneth Tan at MM24 in Quito, Ecuador. We had the opportunity to take a 7-person delegation of leaders from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences who showed excitement, passion, and engagement throughout the General Assembly. Highlights included attending Americas regional sessions where we discussed changes to regional meetings, bylaws related to the emergency budget and when to send invitation packages. We also voted for Colombia to host AmRM25 with 2/3 majority. During plenaries we voted on various subjects including BCPs, policies, final reports, sponsorships and other official agreements, and elections.
 - b. Our incoming National Officers of Research and Professional Exchanges represented our newly re-launched international exchanges program at the Exchanges Fair. They developed partnerships with several medical student associations towards signing successful exchange contracts at the next General Assembly.
 - c. Our delegation served a variety of Canadian food items at the National Food and Drink gathering. We also wrote a statement with the endorsement of many other NMOs recognizing the traditional lands of indigenous people and our role as medical students in pushing forward the various calls to action that have been outlined for us. Check out our CFMS MM23 Delegation Report on the website soon for detailed deliverables, testimonials, and photos from all the delegates.
 4. Relaunch CFMS IFMSA international exchanges program
 - a. Our National Exchange Officers and National Officers of Research Exchange have been hard at work this year to execute the return of what the previous director called CFMS Global Health's flagship program - international exchanges! The last year we administered exchanges was during the 2019-2020 academic year, making it close to 4 years since we have planned and delivered an exchanges program. Our NEOs and NOREs have done an incredible job bringing this program to life thanks to their preparations in the previous year as well as formal handover and transitioning of new incoming National officers. In pre-pandemic years, we typically sent over 100-140 CFMS medical students on exchanges and hosted around 30-50 incoming students. We have now launched the

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program and received applications in Fall 2023 to send/host the first students since 2019-2020 in Spring/Summer 2024. CFMS-Canada exchanges have exceeded its own expectations with over 50 students going on an exchange through CFMS-Canada.

5. CFMS National Global Health Onboarding

- a. The first National Global Health Onboarding was implemented by the previous GH director Khalidha Nassiri in the hopes it will become an annual onboarding event at the start of every year, along with a Global Health Program Handbook. As such, in the spirit of maintaining a well connected portfolio, we decided to host the second national onboarding for all Global Health Portfolio members - National Officers, local officers, and committee members. This was a half-day virtual event that consisted of an anti-oppression training by external facilitators, an overview of the portfolio and everyone's responsibilities, breakout sessions, and time for the portfolio members to meet each other. Around 150 members attended and it received highly positive feedback. Please see the full report of the event [here](#).

6. AFMC Global and Planetary Health Committee

- a. The Dir. GH is the CFMS Global Health representative to the AFMC Global and Planetary Health Committee, formerly known as the AFMC Global Health Network, which meets every 1-2 months where we facilitate national collaboration amongst Canadian medical schools and provide advice/support to the AFMC Board through the AFMC Standing Committee on Social Accountability on strategic and operational matters related to academic medicine and specifically, global and planetary health. The HEART Committee is the CFMS planetary health representative.

7. Global Health Initiative Grant (GHIG)

- a. First launched in 2022 by then National Officers of Partnership Lauren Wong and Negar Atefi, the GHIG allocated ~\$10,000 in funding to 10 student projects related to a global health equity and EDI lens. During the 2022-2023 year, a GHIG Coordinator was recruited to develop a final GHIG Report that is posted on our website. This term, we did not have the funds to continue this project, but have chosen to advocate for its return in the new terms budget.

8. National Officer and Coordinator specific projects - please see separate National Officer and Coordinator reports.

III. UPDATES, PRIORITIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Major priorities and updates

- **Contribute to building institutional memory and capacity within CFMS Global Health:** Given events in 2020-2021 that led to mass resignation within the CFMS and in particular the Global Health Portfolio (GHP), there has been a gap in institutional memory within the GHP. This had been addressed through the impressive work of the previous GH Director Khalidha Nassiri making it easy for us to maintain. Terms of Reference updates, check-ins with team to elicit feedback and goals, supporting leadership team's professional development goals, updating the GHP Handbook, updating transition manuals for handover, updating the IFMSA Handbook with the IFMSA Coordinator outlining IFMSA opportunities, communicating the monthly meeting schedule and major deadlines well ahead of time, and ensuring good documentation within the CFMS Google Drive.
- **Empower, engage, and communicate with medical student leaders within CFMS Global Health:** The Global Health Portfolio recognizes the local officers and Global Health Liaisons (GHLs) at each CFMS medical school who execute local activities that advance our portfolio's mission. During the first GHRT, members at the local level expressed a desire to be better integrated within the national GHP structure. This

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has been addressed through:

- The CFMS Global Health LinkTree where long term opportunities have been promoted
 - An IFMSA Opportunities Master Spreadsheet for all other opportunities
 - CFMS Global Health Facebook group
 - Global Health Monthly Rounds Newsletter
 - CFMS Instagram (we hosted a GH takeover during MM24)
 - Standardizing the GHP onboarding process by adding to our internal Onboarding Manual
 - Creating a national hub of GHs and LOs to share resources and collaborate on global health activities.
- **Increase CFMS Global Health involvement with the IFMSA:** A key pillar to achieving this priority was adding the new position of IFMSA Coordinator during the 2022-2023 year. This position is paralleled by the VP Internal Affairs within the IFMSA structure. Madeleine Kruth, who transitioned to the senior IFMSA Coordinator role this 2023-2024 term has successfully onboarded Kenneth Tan who has acted as IFMSA Coordinator junior ensuring the successful involvement of CFMS Canada in IFMSA activities.
 - **Develop key partnerships within CFMS Global Health:**
 - a. We worked closely with our IFMSA Quebec counterparts this year and I have had the pleasure of meeting with Sophie Fournier-Marcoux, the 2023-2024 IFMSA Quebec President at both IFMSA GAs (AM23, MM24) where our delegations met during NMO hours, president's sessions, and via zoom. Most notable are our meetings with IFMSA-QC where we went from discussing their Bylaw Change Proposals advocating for associate members to have voting rights to celebrating their BCPs winning majority to negotiating member school representation.
 - **Serve and represent CFMS membership through faithfully executing CFMS Board Member responsibilities:** This includes, but is not limited to, exercising fiduciary responsibility by being on track to be within our budget, serving as active Board Member providing feedback and insight on major motions and governance changes.

IV. MEETINGS ATTENDED

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Date	Transition/Onboarding Meetings	Location
May-August, 2023 (~4x)	Transition Meetings with outgoing Dir. GH	Zoom
August 15, 2023	NORP Logistics/Transition Meeting	Zoom
September 9, 2023	GH Leads Meeting with previous Director	Zoom
November 18, 2023	Global Health National Onboarding	Zoom
Date	IFMSA and Exchanges Meetings	Location
March 1-7, 2024	IFMSA March General Meeting	Quito, Ecuador
March 14, 2024	IFMSA Capacity Building Meeting	Zoom

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March 28, 2024	Internal Exchanges Budget Meeting	Zoom
Date	Regular GH Leads Meetings	Location
September 10, 2023	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
September 26, 2023	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
October 17, 2023	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
November 14, 2023	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
December 12, 2023	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
January 23, 2024	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
February 27, 2024	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
March 19, 2024	GH Team Leadership Meeting	Zoom
Date	GHRT Meetings	Location
September 16, 2023	GHRT at AGM	Toronto, ON
November 16, 2023	GHRT virtual	Zoom
December 2, 2023	Global Health Indigenous Health Representation Roundtable	Zoom
February 3, 2024	GHRT virtual	Zoom
Date	Board Meeting	Location
August 5, 2023	Virtual Board Meeting	Zoom
September 14, 2023	Board Meeting at AGM23	Toronto, ON
October 20-21, 2023	Fall Board Meeting	Montreal, QC
November 25, 2023	Virtual Board Meeting	Zoom
January 26-27, 2024	Winter Board Meeting	Calgary, AB
March 9, 2024	Virtual Board Meeting	Zoom

I would like to thank Sam Alatorre for encouraging me to apply for the Dir. GH position. I want to express sincere gratitude for his unwavering encouragement during my application and throughout the term. His belief in my abilities

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and passion for global health played a crucial role in my decision to pursue this opportunity. Sam's support was invaluable, and I deeply appreciate his confidence in me.



During my time as GH Director, I took a leave of absence for 4 months due to personal reasons and introduced Jun Kim as interim Director with permission from CFMS leadership. I now find myself immensely grateful for Jun's exceptional service as the interim Global Health Director as his dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to our cause were instrumental in ensuring the continued success of our initiatives and programs. Jun's seamless transition into the role, coupled with his collaborative approach and prior understanding of our organization, played a crucial role in maintaining momentum and keeping our team focused and motivated. His leadership was not only commendable but also inspirational, setting a high standard for excellence that resonated throughout our team. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Jun for his outstanding contributions during my absence. His willingness to step up and take on additional responsibilities speaks volumes about his dedication and commitment to our organization's success.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as the 2023-2024 CFMS Director of Global Health. The experiences I have had are ones I will carry with me for the rest of my life. The challenges faced and the successes achieved have further fueled my passion for Global Health and have laid the path for me to continue to advocate beyond this role. I am committed to continuing the important work of advancing global health initiatives and making a positive impact on communities worldwide.

Sincerely,

Merry Ghebretatios

Director of Global Health | Directeur de la santé mondiale

Canadian Federation of Medical Students | Fédération des étudiants en médecine du Canada

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I wish to acknowledge that the CFMS main office is located on unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, colonially known as Ottawa.